



With The Other Hand

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by Robin Calamaio

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Many things require balance. The salvation message of the Bible is a classic case in point. Paul told the Ephesian elders (at Miletus), "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the **whole purpose of God**" (Ac 20:27). The event of the cross stands perfectly balanced at the top of many of God's "opposing" attributes. For example, God is just and He is also merciful. The cross is balanced at the top of both teachings. In a similar vein, God is compassionate and is also a God of wrath. The cross is

perched at the top of a full expression of both attributes. The problem with most presentations about God - whether from an individual, church, or an entire denomination - is a lack of *Biblical balance* in the message. So what do I mean by "*Biblical balance*"?

Let's first rule out some things. To begin, Biblical balance has nothing to do with compromise. It is not an attempt to take two competing ideas (i.e., God's justice and God's mercy) and mingle them together so as to dilute either - and confuse both. Next, it has nothing to do with "political correctness" - a skirting away from words or concepts that may "offend" someone. That is fear driven ending with no substance. Biblical balance is preserved from such temporal pollutions. And Biblical balance is not a presentation accompanied by hand wringing apologies for the Biblical material on the given subject. The teaching is not fraught with statements like, "*This is so hard for us to understand,*" or, "*There are many interpretations about this.*"

Additionally, Biblical balance is not achieved through denominational bylaws, confessions, catechisms, or other "belief statements." Simple parroting of age-old church doctrines or practices, without the freedom to truly examine the forwarded positions - is not God's call.

Also, the intensity of one's presentation, or the sincerity of the held belief, or the charisma of the one presenting has nothing to do with Biblical balance. Pounding pulpits does not mean accuracy is being presented. A lot is going to burn up before Jesus Christ at the Judgment of the Great Day. Only what *He agrees with* - as an accurate representation of His will and ways - will withstand His scrutiny. The Bible is full of warnings *to those who represent Him in this current age* (See Ja 3:1, 1Cor 3:1-15, 2Pet 1:20 through Chapter 2, and Jude 3-20).

Biblical balance is achieved when *apparent* competing teachings are fully and accurately explored and presented. Preconceived ideas and prejudices have been laid aside, and personal career goals have been abandoned (i.e., being a denominational loyalist *first* so as to work up the organizational ladder). Those things have been replaced by a *genuine* seeking of God on the particular matter, accompanied by a study of His word - *and an openness to examine all the competing ideas and positions on the given subject*. It is only through such a crucible that one (or a group) can achieve some semblance of accuracy.

This is not beyond our reach for at least one *huge reason*. It is God's will for us to learn and grow in the truth. That is why we have the Bible. "*I am the Lord, and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in some dark land ... I, the Lord, speak righteousness, declaring things that are upright*" (Isa 45:18,19). His challenge to us stands: "*Present your case ... Bring forward your strong arguments ... examine all things carefully ... and if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously, and without reproach, and it will be given to him*" (Isa 41:21, 1Thes 5:21, and Ja 1:5). God wants us to inquire about anything we desire. He is not intimidated by our intellect, emotions, opinions, or contrary "evidences."

In this endeavor, our attitude is of highest importance. We are not to be timid or sheepish, but, also removed is an attitude of "rights," due, or demands from Him. The balance *here* is a recognition that God alone knows what is actually true in any given area - and then letting Him know *we don't know* - and want in! This is accomplished by earnest requests, as well as an invite for Him to expose, challenge, and (if necessary) change our motives for why we want into His things.

It is actually His will that we apply ourselves *fully* to such an endeavor - aggressively expending our energy. "*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*" (Jer 29:13). And His amazing response toward that one? "*For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His*" (2Ch 16:9). Have you ever done this? Is it possible you are missing out on something *real and substantial* - far beyond your current comprehension? Is it possible you could be expanded in mind, and emotion, and spirit by interaction with the Creator of all things?

Biblical Balance on the Message of the Cross

The first fellowship I attended was out of balance on this message. To be sure, they hammered away on sin - and God's view of it with little compromise. At one Bible Study, we were told that if we went 36 mph in a 35 mph zone, God could rightly vaporize us and assign us into eternal Hell for that one sin (a violation of a proper restriction by a God-established governing authority - Ro 13:1-7). Actually, thirty years later, I do believe that is an accurate assertion. One sin can indeed rightly doom a person before God. But, after leaving that particular Bible study, I did begin to question if we were getting the full picture. While I was driving 34 mph, that teacher zipped past my car - probably at about 50 mph. So, maybe a "little compromise"?

Then, there is the other presentation where God is presented as a bundle of forgiving love. After a few sermons where I was "auditioning" for the pastor position of a Brethren Church (as a nondenominational candidate), one of the leading couples successfully worked to get me in. She sensed a balance in my working with the Bible. The wife said she knew there was something wrong with the years of "preaching and teaching" to which she had been subjected. *"Every standard of decency in our society is under assault and yet I just keep hearing, **'God loves everybody.'**" He is presented as a grieving, injured God - longing for us all - standing by ... as the weeping, jilted lover of all mankind."*

So what is the Biblical balance of the message of the cross? Well, sometime after the car whizzed by, I brought up this up before a brother named Jack Fontaine. He said, *"Well, I do both. I maximize sin ... and I also maximize grace."* That's it. There is the Biblical balance on the message of the cross! Maximize both! From that day forward, I hope that is what I have done - do - and will do.

*"May I point out your sin - with no compromising
While at the same time - pointing with the other hand - to Him
as He's hanging on the cross -
Paying the cost - for your rebellion."* (Second verse of this song.)

Sin *truly* is a big thing. If there was no sin, there would be no injury to anyone mentally, emotionally, spiritually, or physically. There would be no death. There would be no Hades or Hell. There would be no wrath of God. These things exist because of sin. So, it is a big deal - a real big deal.

Recently, my youngest daughter (at age 11) did some things that were out of bounds. When caught (and it was a web of things) I let her know I needed some time to decide how to respond. After a couple weeks I asked her if she had ever seen me sin. She said, "Yes." I said, *"You're right. And do you know what that proves?"* "No. What?" *"It proves that **I don't even understand** how serious sin is. At your age, your problem is not really with me - but with God. The only thing I am concerned with is that God uses me to somehow impress upon you the importance of what you did and how He views it."* Sparing the details, I think God did that. And sin is so serious that God determined there was only one possible way it could be absolved - by God in a body, nailed to a tree, and while dying ... have our sins transferred *into* Him. Recently, a young man told me that his stepfather had stated that he had committed some sins that were too big to be forgiven. I told this young man that next time they get into that discussion, say something like this: *"I guess what you are saying is that the blood of Jesus is not good enough to take care of what you did."* I am looking forward to a report back.

Alternately, pardon for one's sin(s) *truly* is a big thing too. But without some understanding of the perils of being left in one's sin, the value of pardon will not be understood, appreciated or sought. That means balance - Biblical balance - for this message is the call.

Black Colors In the Drawing

All the sins listed at the bottom are surrounded by black. We often speak of evil as being “*black as sin*.” We swim in this black sea of sin. And black also represents the darkness of sin. It does darken the heart, darken the understanding, and blind the eyes (Ro 1:21, Eph 4:18, and Ro 11:10). And Hell is described as “*outer darkness*” (Mt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30, etc.). But, I could have just as easily made this color red. In fact, if I could redraw this, I would do so. “‘*Come now, and let us reason together,*’ says the Lord. ‘*Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white like snow; though they are red like crimson they will be white like wool*’” (Isa 1:18).

The List of Sins

This is just a smattering. There are many more. And each of us commit many of them *more than once* - some thousands and thousands of times. And there are also sins of omission - things we should have done, *but did not!* I have written on many aspects of sin in much of my writing. But the point here - we are swimming in a poisonous sea of death and God Himself is cataloging *every one* of our transgressions. This personal “rap sheet” forms a “*certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which (is) hostile to us*” (Col 2:14). It is our death warrant. And by the grace of God, and in the love of God, and in the power of God, I will “*point out your sin with no compromising, while at the same time pointing ...*

With the Other Hand - to Him

as He's hanging on the cross, paying the cost for your rebellion ...” (more of this song's lyrics). As a Christian, all of our sins were wrapped up as one big “present” and given to the Son of God as He was dying on a Roman cross. That is our gift to Him. And He accepted it ... and killed it. He killed our death warrant. As our Great High Priest, He knew His blood (life) *alone* had the power *to kill our sin* - and break its power, dominion and just claim upon us. Notice the black color does not extend *past* the cross. At the cross, sin met its match. The blood of Jesus vaporized my sin. “*I, even I, am the One who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins*” (Isa 43:25). I am now, and will forever be, indebted to Him. That's good debt.

Me

The table represents whatever platform God grants me to declare His material. It is the greatest honor that can be bestowed upon a man to be given the privilege to expose His matters to sick and dying creatures. The open Bible represents what is to be proclaimed. Only His word is authoritative in matters pertaining to Him. In looking over my list of sins in this drawing, there are a few which I now wish I had left out. I will let you look them over and see if you can guess which ones I mean. While I still can make a case for those I would now expunge, there are enough clear sins enunciated in the Bible, that I could have left out the others. I am actually very stubborn about sin. I want to know *from God* what *He* calls sin - and why it is wrong. You should be that stubborn too. But ask Him. Ask Him to teach you. Listen to others, but examine any sins they call out - against the Bible itself. That is the authority. The only authority.

Also, I am standing on my guitar. That *was* an idol in my life - but now it's under my feet. That was an interesting chapter in my life that I relate in detail in, “[*My Music Testimony*](#).” If you wonder about the motives and struggles of such a “showy gift” you may find that testimony quite interesting. It is a story - and as such - a fast read. God really is good. And I also am sure He gets great joy out of doing great things for us.

The Colors Green and Yellow - and an Empty Tomb

When you get out of the black, you come into green and yellow - Life and Light. And the empty

tomb? By it, Jesus “*was declared with power to be the Son of God as a result of the resurrection from the dead*” (Ro 1:4). Christianity stands - or falls - on the reality of this event.

With the Other Hand

Robin Calamaio

May I proclaim Jesus only - and Him crucified.
Then Him - risen - In Him no deception or lies.
Not cunningly devised - fables
Nothing disguised - it's stable
He'll make us realize - we're able
To sit, by His graces - at His Table.

May I point out your sin - with no compromisin'
While at the same time pointin' - with the other hand to Him
As He's hangin' - on the cross
Payin' the cost - for your rebellion
Making found what was lost
Makin' order of lives storm tossed.

We have a God of declaration, a God of explanation
Who will take your experience too
Combining all these things - in His peculiar school
Making you - a unique tool - that He will use
In the work of honoring the Son - and what He's done
He'll give you ways of spreadin'
The good news through this creation,

So,
May I point out your sin - with no compromisin'
While at the same time pointin' - with the other hand to Him
As He's hangin' - on the cross
Paying the cost - for your rebellion
Making found what was lost
Makin' order of lives storm tossed.

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Here's the Song:

<https://youtu.be/5NHbdpLAna8>

Here's the “Commentary on the Song”:

<https://youtu.be/PME77zrKTpc>

Here's the video “Explanation of the Drawing”:

<https://youtu.be/i0k4SrT-hk4>

In 1977, Robin became a Christian. BA, Bus Admin (Milligan College '90) and M-Div (Emmanuel School of Religion '92).